

## A Graphic Novel Exploration

Internet researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This Internet Exploration will introduce you to or enhance your knowledge of graphic novels. You will have an opportunity to explore several aspects of the genre, make note of important information you find out, and then create a six-panel page that highlights key ideas you want to share with your classmates about your exploration.

1. Before starting this activity, take a few minutes to write a couple of paragraphs about what you know, think you know, or have heard about graphic novels and comic books.
2. Choose one of these sites to go to an article that contains general or overview information about graphic novels:

“The Graphic Novel Silver Anniversary” by Andrew D. Arnold on Time.com  
<http://www.time.com/time/columnist/arnold/article/0,9565,542579,00.html>

“A Brief History of the Graphic Novel” by Stan Tychinski, a 35-year comic collector, published on the Brodart site (Brodart is a well-known supplier of circulation-ready materials for libraries)  
<http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/history.htm>

“Graphic Novels: History and Basics” on the Internet Public Library’s Teenspace site:  
<http://www.ipl.org/div/procrast/graphicnovels/gnsHistBasics.html>

Read through the article you selected and choose 3-5 pieces of new information you found out about the genre that you would like to share with your classmates. Write down that information now.

Then go to the Clermont County Public Library site from Batavia, Ohio:  
[http://www.clermont.lib.oh.us/graphic\\_novels.html](http://www.clermont.lib.oh.us/graphic_novels.html), Read the brief overview information on this page and then click on the “Understanding Graphic Novels” balloon. Scroll down that page to the “Terms and Definitions” part.

Be able to explain the difference between one of these pairs of terms: Anime and Manga or Comic Book and Graphic Novel.

3. Go to the following three sites that contain articles on the pros and cons of reading Graphic Novels:

“Making the Case for Graphic Novels...”  
by Michael R. Lavin, a veteran reference and collection development librarian who is also known for his website *Comic Books for Young Adults*  
[http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/kids\\_and\\_gns.htm](http://www.graphicnovels.brodart.com/kids_and_gns.htm)

“Comics prove reading can be laughing matter” by Denise-Marie Balona originally published January 5, 2005 in *The Orlando Sentinel*  
[http://www.hollandsentinel.com/stories/010505/lif\\_010505053.shtml](http://www.hollandsentinel.com/stories/010505/lif_010505053.shtml)

Can the X-Men Make You Smarter? by Drego Little on the *Parents' Choice* media review website:  
[http://www.parentschoice.org/full\\_abstract.cfm?art\\_id=140&the\\_page=reading\\_list](http://www.parentschoice.org/full_abstract.cfm?art_id=140&the_page=reading_list)

In your opinion, what is the strongest pro argument for reading graphic novels and what is the strongest con argument against reading graphic novels? What makes you think so?

Make note of that information to share with your classmates.

4. Go to Random House Publishing's Pantheon Graphic Novels site:  
<http://www.randomhouse.com/pantheon/graphicnovels/index.html>

Scroll down to the bottom of the page and **choose one** of the following graphic novelists to read more about: Art Spiegelman, Marjane Satrapi, Dan Clowes, or Chris Ware

**or...** go to either of these sites to read more about two other important graphic novel creators:

Well-known writer and graphic novelist, Neil Gaiman's official website:  
<http://www.neilgaiman.com/index.asp>

Will Eisner's entry in the Lambiek.net online Comiclopedia (Lambiek is “Europe's first and most famous antiquarian comic shop, and is a hallmark in the world of comics” and is located in Amsterdam).  
<http://lambiek.net/artists/e/eisner.htm>

For the person you chose to read about, explain what contribution he/she has made to the world of graphic novels or why he/she is a key figure in the world of graphic novels.

Choose and write down one or two pieces of important information about him/her that you would like to share with the class.

5. Any of the following sites have either reviews or annotated lists of graphic novels.

Choose one of these sites, read through some of the reviews or annotations and then select one work that you would either like to find out more about or read if you could do so. In writing, explain what drew you to that particular selection.

“A Graphic Literature Library” by Andrew Arnold on Time.com  
<http://www.time.com/time/columnist/arnold/article/0,9565,547796,00.html>

DC Comics “Thirty Essential Graphic Novels” list:  
<http://www.dccomics.com/sites/essential30/>

No Flying No Tights, a website reviewing graphic novels for teens:

<http://www.noflyingnotights.com/core.html>

6. All students should go to this Introduction to Graphic Novels by cartoonist Jessica Abel written in graphic novel form <http://www.artbomb.net/comics/introgn.jsp>.

Make note of two helpful pieces of information you learned about characteristics of comics and graphic novels and then comment on the way the information was presented. Next, go to any one of the following sites and find out some information on the process of creating graphic novels and/or comics or some of the elements of graphic novels or comics:

“Making Comics, the Technical Stuff” on Artbabe.com

[http://www.artbabe.com/comicsandart/diy/diy\\_make.html](http://www.artbabe.com/comicsandart/diy/diy_make.html)

Go to the “Making Mini-Comics” selection on the menu and read through it.

“On Writing for Comics” by Astro City creator Kurt Busiek

<http://www.whiterose.org/dr.elmo/cwrite/index.html>

“Drawing Comics” on artist Scott McDaniel’s official website:

<http://www.scottmcdaniel.net/>

(be sure to go to the Selection List menu in the lower left hand corner of the page)

The Dictionary of Comic Book Words:

<http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/300/ktaylor/kaboom/index.htm>

Explore some entries in this very unconventional dictionary; scroll to the bottom of the page for the alphabet, then click on a letter.

Make some notes about what you find out from the site you visited. Give your opinion of both the content you encountered and the way it was presented. Be ready to share these items with your classmates.

7. For Playing or Pondering—look over AT LEAST ONE of these seven comics and graphic novel related sites and take some notes on what you discover or do there. The rest of the class will want to know why you went where you did and whether you would recommend a visit to the site with your reasons why. Be sure to write down that information:

The First Post Online’s (out of Great Britain) review of the graphic novelized version of the 9-11 Commission’s Report (Be sure to go through the 8-page excerpt on the site)

<http://www.thefirstpost.co.uk/index.php?menuID=2&subID=898>

The Periodic Table of Comic Books; this site tracks where elements from the periodic table are part of a comic book story

<http://www.uky.edu/Projects/Chemcomics/>

This is the Comic Art and Graffix Gallery’s (out of New York) online history of comics

<http://www.comic-art.com/history.htm>

This is a site called Caricature Zone established out of a passion for caricatures by two graphic designers, Marie Meunier and Patrick Sterno.

<http://www.cln.org/cgi-bin/linkto.cgi?http://www.magixl.com/heads/intro.html>

This is cartoonist and author Scott McCloud's "Story Machine" to help writers and artists unlock their imaginations.

<http://www.scottmccloud.com/inventions/machine/machine.html>

An experimental image-browsing interface by jim bumgardner of krazydad.com of graphic novel covers (covers from amazon.com); the graphic novel covers on the site are arranged horizontally by price, and vertically by color

<http://www.krazydad.com/coverpop/>

This is the Comics Creator's Bill of Rights authored by cartoonist and author Scott McCloud:

[http://www.scottmccloud.com/inventions/bill/bill\\_of\\_rights.html](http://www.scottmccloud.com/inventions/bill/bill_of_rights.html)

8. When you finish this exploration activity, review the initial paragraphs you wrote about your knowledge of graphic novels then write another couple of paragraphs about any new information you discovered or learned about comics and graphic novels. Include in this paragraph a site from among the ones you visited that you think anyone your age should visit if they want some good information about the graphic novel genre in particular. Be sure to support your choice with sound reasons.

9. Finally, after the class has roughed out a six-panel comic on the chart paper summing up their discussion of information they learned from doing this activity, use the Comic Creator interactive tool from ReadWriteThink.org:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/student\\_mat/student\\_material.asp?id=21](http://www.readwritethink.org/student_mat/student_material.asp?id=21) and create a six panel comic strip of your own that highlights some of the key pieces of information you learned from this activity. Try not to duplicate information from the class strip.